

**SOILS AND BIOGEOCHEMISTRY  
GRADUATE GROUP**

**STUDENT FIELD GUIDE**

**June 2018**

**[http://soils.ucdavis.edu/resource-guide/student field guide/](http://soils.ucdavis.edu/resource-guide/student_field_guide/)**

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## INTRODUCTION

This Field Guide is your handbook in navigating the winding, sometimes bumpy, but exciting terrain of graduate study at UC Davis and in the Soils and Biogeochemistry Graduate Group. If you're a prospective student, we hope the Field Guide will answer questions that may arise during your application process. For new students, we hope it will serve as a dependable resource to help guide you through the many choices you will be making. For continuing students who encounter the unfamiliar and unexpected along the way, we hope it will serve as a reliable, hip-pocket companion.

The Field Guide is a work in progress. As you journey through your academic study and experiences, your questions and challenges will help us determine what revisions might be necessary. We welcome your comments, critiques and suggestions as we travel the road ahead.

## DEPARTMENT AND OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES CONTACTS

### Faculty

- Graduate Group Chair: Sanjai Parikh, [sjparikh@ucdavis.edu](mailto:sjparikh@ucdavis.edu), 3230 PES, 530-752-1265
- Graduate Group Adviser (incoming students): Randy Dahlgren, [radahlgren@ucdavis.edu](mailto:radahlgren@ucdavis.edu), 3134 PES, 530-752-2814
- Graduate Group Adviser (continuing students): Jorge Rodrigues, [jmrodrigues@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jmrodrigues@ucdavis.edu), 3308 PES, 530-341-4355
- Graduate Group Admissions Adviser: Jorge Rodrigues, [jmrodrigues@ucdavis.edu](mailto:jmrodrigues@ucdavis.edu), 3308 PES, 530-341-4355
- Major Professor: SBG faculty member who guides your research

### Department and Office of Graduate Studies Staff

- Graduate Group Coordinator: Shila Ruiz, [shruiz@ucdavis.edu](mailto:shruiz@ucdavis.edu), 1152 PES, 530-752-1669
- LAWR Business Office Personnel: LAWR Main Office- Account Managers (organized by PI); 1110 PES
- Graduate Studies, Student Affairs Officer: Elizabeth Sturdy, [ejsturdy@ucdavis.edu](mailto:ejsturdy@ucdavis.edu), 250 Mrak Hall, 530-754-5886

## THE GRADUATE GROUP CONCEPT

Many research questions go beyond the traditional academic department. At UC Davis, graduate programs may be organized as interdisciplinary graduate groups that include faculty from various departments and Colleges, giving students broad flexibility in areas of research from across campus. The

SBG graduate group operates from the Department of Land, Air, and Water Resources (LAWR), and consists of 30 faculty members who hold appointments in many departments, including LAWR, Chemistry, Plant Sciences, Civil and Environmental Engineering & Materials Science, Environmental Science & Policy, Viticulture & Enology, and Geology. Two other graduate groups operate from LAWR: Atmospheric Science and Hydrologic Sciences.

The chair of the graduate group is responsible for overseeing the operation of the group; the graduate group adviser guides your academic planning and committee selection; the graduate group admissions adviser oversees the admissions application process. Support staff (including SBG Student Affairs Officer and departmental business office personnel, and personnel in Graduate Studies) serves as sources of information regarding procedures, records, petitions and applications, campus resources, funding, and fellowships and awards.

## APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

### Preparatory Work

Undergraduate and/or post-graduate coursework in chemistry, physics, biology, soil science, and calculus is required for admission into SBG. Applicants admitted without these prerequisites must complete the necessary courses to satisfy their deficiencies during their first year of study.

### How to Apply

Application is made through the UC Davis Graduate Studies online application system. Please visit [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/prospective/apply\\_online.cfm](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/prospective/apply_online.cfm).

### Admission Requirements

Admission to SBG is based on:

- Academic background and at least a 3.0/4.0 grade point average.
- Preparation and performance in courses that constitute basic preparation for advanced study in soil science. (See Preparatory Work, above.)
- Verbal, quantitative, and analytical Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores. Subject exams are not required.
- Three letters of recommendation.
- TOEFL scores for applicants whose primary language is not English. The minimum scores required for admission to graduate study at UC Davis are 550 for the paper test and 80 for the Internet-based test.
- Identification of one or more members of the group willing to serve as a major professor.

The final decision on admission is the responsibility of the dean of Graduate Studies upon recommendation of the SBG Graduate Group.

## **SELECTING A MAJOR PROFESSOR**

The major professor guides and directs your research and is identified for each student during the SBG MS Plan I and Ph.D. admission process. You should begin your search for a major professor early, while completing your application and by following these guidelines:

- Consult the SBG online faculty list and identify faculty members whose research interests align with yours. E-mail them regarding your interests.
- Write a specific statement of purpose that clearly describes your research interests. During the application review process, faculty will choose students on the basis of interests, experience, academic record, GRE scores, and letters of recommendation.
- If possible, consult with graduate students already in the program for ideas about potential major professors.
- If possible, arrange a visit to meet with potential major professors or schedule a phone call to discuss common interests.

Once you have found a major professor, talk with him/her about funding, research projects, and expectations.

## **GRADUATE SHOWCASE – GRADUATE RECRUITMENT EVENT**

The SBG Graduate Group hosts an annual student recruitment event in which prospective students are invited to visit the campus and learn more about the program, or participates with its sister graduate groups in LAWR, Atmospheric Science and Hydrologic Sciences, to invite a select group of applicants to the Graduate Showcase, an annual two-day recruitment event in February. This is an opportunity for prospective students to meet faculty and continuing students, visit our programs and research labs, and tour the UC Davis campus and surrounding area. Invitation to the SBG recruitment event or Showcase does not guarantee admission.

## **REGISTRATION AND COURSE ENROLLMENT**

### **Registered Status**

Registered student status requires that you be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units of coursework or SSC 299 (research) units and that you pay fees for the quarter. If you have not enrolled and have not paid

fees, you are a non-registered student. If you are on Planned Educational Leave (PELP) or are on Filing Fee status, you also are considered a non-registered student.

### How to Register

- Once you obtain your student ID, password, and personal access code (PAC), you may complete your course registration online through SISWeb, the university computer system, <http://sisweb.ucdavis.edu>.
- To learn how to activate your student ID, visit <http://aggiecard.ucdavis.edu>.
- Obtain your e-mail address and Kerberos password by visiting <https://computingaccounts.ucdavis.edu/cgi-bin/services/index.cgi>.
- To log onto SISWEB, you will need your Kerberos password and a personal access code (PAC). Initially, your PAC is your six-digit birth date. Once you access the system, be sure to follow the menu prompts to choose a new PAC. You will receive notification of registration dates by mail, and once you have the above identifiers, you can complete registration for classes online.

### Class Schedule and Registration Guide

Consult the quarterly *Class Schedule and Registration Guide*, <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/csrg/>, for registration dates and times, quarterly deadlines, course lists, wait list information, etc.

### Late Registration

To avoid late fees and financial support problems, you must enroll, register, and pay fees in a timely manner. Keep in mind:

- If you add or drop a course after the add/drop deadlines, you will be charged a fee.
- Fees that are paid from sources such as fellowships and academic appointments will not be paid until you are registered for a minimum of 12 units. If you do not complete your registration by the last day to pay university fees, you will be charged a late fee. See <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/csrg/feepay.html>.
- You may consult *The University Catalog* or *Class Schedule and Registration Guide* for add/drop deadlines, available at the <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/>.

### Units

For full-time status, you must enroll in at least 12 units per quarter, which can be any combination of upper division (100-level) or graduate course units (200-level); Seminar (290), Group Study (298), Research (299) units; or Teaching Assistant Training Practicum (396) units. The graduate group encourages you to enroll in more than 12 units (up to 16 total) of upper division and graduate courses combined, or for more than 12 units (again up to 16 units) of graduate level courses. Enrolling for greater than 16 units requires the special approval of the dean of Graduate Studies.

### Enrolling in Research (SSC 299)

SSC 299 is the course in which you enroll to receive credit for your research. The course registration number (CRN) is linked directly to the quarter and to your major professor/instructor, the individual with whom you are conducting research. Three more numbers are attached to the CRN number, defined as the section number, indicating the faculty member involved (e.g., SSC 299-034). You may enroll in up to 12 units, depending upon your research activity and course load and based upon the advice of your major professor and adviser. The Graduate Program Coordinator will email CRNs for each respective quarter to all current students prior to registration deadlines.

### Part Time Status

If you meet eligibility criteria, you may apply for part-time status, which is 6 units or fewer, through the Registrar, <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/>.

### Dropping Courses

If you want to drop a course after the 10<sup>th</sup> day of instruction, you must file a Permission to Drop Petition, available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

### Late Add

If you wish to add a course after the 12<sup>th</sup> day of instruction, you must have approval from the instructor or program. If permission is granted, go to the course/program department for a PTR (permission to register) number. Use SISWEB to add the course by using the issued number within three days. You will be charged a nominal fee.

### Temporary Study at Another UC Campus

If you are in good standing and have completed at least one quarter in residence at Davis, and you wish to study temporarily at another UC campus, you may obtain an application to the Intercampus Exchange Program, at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

## **TAKING A BREAK OR LEAVING CAMPUS**

If you wish to take a break from your course of study or temporarily leave the UC Campus, you have the options listed below.

### Planned Education Leave (PELP)

PELP status is available if you wish to take a leave for various reasons, including health issues, family crises, clarification of educational goals, or military service. PELP may be approved for a maximum of three quarters. Link to PELP leave form: [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/GS338\\_PELP.pdf](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/GS338_PELP.pdf). An extension can be requested, form available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>. New graduate

students are NOT eligible for a PELP during their first term of instruction. Students may NOT hold student employment (TA, GSR, etc.) and may not receive fellowship funds while on PELP. International students must have their PELP status approved by the Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS), <http://siss.ucdavis.edu/>, prior to submission of the PELP application. PELP applications must be submitted to Graduate Studies no later than the first day of the quarter in which the PELP status is to begin. If you begin the registration process and then withdraw from registration after the first day of the quarter, you may be billed for fees owed or have to repay funding. The SBG Student Affairs Officer will help you initiate the application process.

### **Filing Fee**

Filing Fee is a non-registered status available if you have advanced to candidacy for your degree. Filing Fee status maintains your eligibility to complete your degree while not registered. You can use this option when all of your courses and research have been completed and you no longer need to use campus facilities. Filing fee status is for ONE QUARTER ONLY. If you have not filed your thesis/dissertation or taken your final examination by the quarter indicated on your application, you may be required to readmit, register, and pay full fees in order to fulfill all degree requirements. You may hold an academic appointment title (GSR, TA, Associate In (AI), and similar titles) for ONE QUARTER ONLY.

Application forms and information are available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>. Requests for a Filing Fee extension are considered by application, available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

### **Registration in Absentia**

Graduate students whose research or study requires them to remain outside California for the entire quarter may register *in absentia* and pay a reduced fee. Visit <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/> and click on “*In Absentia*” links. In Absentia Registration Frequently Asked Questions link: [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/in\\_absentiaFAQs.html](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/in_absentiaFAQs.html)

### **Withdrawal**

If aforementioned options are not appropriate for you, you may withdraw during the quarter by obtaining a withdrawal petition from the Registrar, available at [http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/html/office\\_of\\_the\\_registrar\\_forms.html](http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/html/office_of_the_registrar_forms.html).

### **Readmission**

If you drop out of the graduate program, but wish to return, you must file an Application for Readmission, available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/> at least six weeks prior to the beginning of the quarter in which you plan to enroll. The SBG Graduate Group requires additional documentation for readmission application. Please see the graduate coordinator for details.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

UC requires that all registered students have health insurance. The Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) is designed specifically for UC Davis students, providing medical, dental and vision benefits. Registered students are automatically enrolled in SHIP. Students with comparable health insurance may waive participation through the online waiver application. SHIP coverage, fees, policies, and waiver application are available at <http://healthcenter.ucdavis.edu/insurance/gship/index.html>.

Once you submit your waiver application and it is approved, it will remain in effect for the rest of the academic year. If you are enrolled in Davis SHIP for Spring term, your coverage automatically extends through the ends of Summer term at no extra cost. Frequently Asked Questions link: <http://shcs.ucdavis.edu/insurance/ship/faqs.html>

Graduate students who are enrolled in SHIP have the option to enroll eligible dependents in a voluntary plan. For information, visit <http://shcs.ucdavis.edu/insurance/ship/dependents.html>.

## ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

If you are a new international student, you will have an immigration hold that must be released by Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS) before you can complete registration. SISS information is available at <http://siss.ucdavis.edu/>.

Prior to your first quarter of enrollment, if your native language is not English and you have an undergraduate degree from an institution at which English is not the primary language of instruction, you are required to take the English examination given by the English as Second Language (ESL) office. More information is available at <http://esl.ucdavis.edu/>. Results of this exam will determine what, if any, ESL class that you will be required to take.

## BILLING, FEES, TUITION

### Billing

Here's a list of resources regarding your billing:

- To view your outstanding account balance using SISWeb or MyBill, visit: <http://studentaccounting.ucdavis.edu/bills/mybill.cfm>.
- For up-to-date information on fees, fee payment options, deadlines, late fees, etc., visit the Student Accounting Web site, <http://studentaccounting.ucdavis.edu>.
- You may contact the Student Accounting Office, 530-752-3646 or visit 2100 Dutton Hall.
- Or visit the Registrar's Web site, <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/csrg/fees.html#Important>.

### Fellowship Stipend

If you are to receive a stipend, you will be paid monthly (1<sup>st</sup> of the month) through the UC Davis Student Accounting Office for domestic students. For international students, you will receive your payment through the Payroll System (checks pick up at the LAWR Admin Office in PES room 1110).

Note that fellowships do not disburse until you enroll in classes. These awards are subject to gubernatorial, legislative and Regental action, and adjustments will be made to your award for actual fee amounts. Unused fee awards will not generate a refund to you. For tax information, please refer to the *Regulations for Graduate Students Receiving Fellowships*. This award also requires the filing of a *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. The first payment for Fall Quarter is November 1<sup>st</sup>, Winter is February 1<sup>st</sup>, and Spring is May 1<sup>st</sup>. To save time, you should sign up for direct deposit so that you don't have to stand in line to receive your check.

Information about **Direct Deposit**: <http://accounting.ucdavis.edu/directdep.cfm>

### Quarterly Fees/Tuition

As a full-time graduate student you pay various fees for such services as the Graduate Student Association (GSA), campus improvement, safety, your health insurance (SHIP), and, of course, your education. To learn exactly what your fees are and where they go, visit <http://budget.ucdavis.edu/studentfees>. If you're a part-time student, you receive a 50 % reduction of the educational fee. If you're a part-time nonresident student, you also receive a 50 % reduction in nonresident tuition. If your status is Registration *in Absentia*, which means your study requires you to remain outside California, visit [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/in\\_absentiaFAQs.html](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/in_absentiaFAQs.html).

If you are a nonresident and are not able to establish California residency, you must pay nonresident tuition each quarter. Nonresident doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy by the first day of the term will receive 100 % nonresident tuition remission. A Ph.D. candidate or professional doctoral student may receive the reduced nonresident tuition rate for a maximum of three years and after that must pay the full amount. Visit [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/nrt\\_remission.html](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/nrt_remission.html) for more information.

## One-time Fees

One-time fees include application for admission fee, readmission fee, PELP, candidacy fee, Filing Fee. These fees change periodically; consult the Graduate Program Coordinator or Graduate Studies, <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/index.cfm>, or the Registrar, <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/>, for current fee amounts.

## Establishing California Residency

As a California resident, you will not have to pay nonresident tuition. Therefore, it is to your advantage if you are a US citizen or have a green card to investigate the steps necessary to becoming a legal resident.

Begin the process as soon as you arrive and at least one full year before the start of the quarter in which you wish to be classified as a resident. For tuition purposes, physical presence and intent must be demonstrated for more than one year. Intent includes, but is not limited to, having a California driver's license or ID card, registering to vote and voting, using a California permanent address on all records, and paying state income tax as a resident.

During the quarter preceding the one for which you seek reclassification, obtain a petition from the Residence Deputy located in the Registrar's office, 12 Mrak Hall, 530-752-5029, <http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/html/slr.html#WhoResident>. Return the completed petition at least two weeks before the start of the quarter.

## **FINANCING GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Details of financial support and research funding are listed below.

### Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

Annually, all graduate students who are US citizens, permanent residents, or immigrants are required to file a FAFSA, preferably by the priority filing date of March 2. This form is submitted directly to the US Department of Education and determines your financial need. It is used for consideration of fellowships, block grants, stipends, loans, and Work Study funds that pay some GSR salaries. FAFSA is available at the UC Davis Office Financial Aid in Dutton Hall or online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. Include UC Davis School Code 001313 on the FAFSA.

### International Student Requirements

International students are advised to consult Services for International Students and Scholars (SISS), at <http://siss.ucdavis.edu/>, regarding immigration visa status and employment.

## Academic Appointments

By working as a GSR, TA, or Reader, you gain professional experience while earning a paycheck and obtaining fee remissions. Students may work up to 50 % time. As an entering student, you may receive an appointment as a GSR under the direction of your major professor, and as such, you are eligible for a remission of in-state and nonresident tuition and fees. SBG students receive electronic notification of TA and Reader positions each quarter with instructions on application. Students may seek TA opportunities in other departments. TAs and Readers employed at a minimum of 25 % of full time receive a partial remission of their fees. Please note that students are responsible for the GSA, MU, Facilities & Campus Enhancements, Campus Expansion Initiative, and Student Facility Safety fees.

A Teaching Assistant (TA) is a full-time registered graduate student, chosen for excellent scholarship and teaching promise, serving an apprenticeship under the active tutelage and supervision of a regular faculty member. The Teaching Assistant is responsible only for the conduct of recitation, laboratory, or quiz sections under the active direction and supervision of a regular member of the faculty to whom final responsibility for the course's entire instruction, including the performance of Teaching Assistants, has been assigned.

The title Reader is given to a student employed for the ability to render diverse services as a "course assistant," which will normally include the grading of student papers and examinations. A Reader will not be given the responsibilities customarily accorded a Teaching Assistant.

For more information, visit <http://budget.ucdavis.edu/studentfees>.

Graduate Student Appointments: <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/employment/>

## Other Employment

The Graduate Program Coordinator will distribute employment information to students as positions are advertised. For more information about employment opportunities or professional development services, you can meet with a coordinator in the Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Career Services program area of the Internship and Career Center, located in South Hall, or call 530-752-7841 to schedule an appointment. Online resources and a calendar of workshops and events for graduate students are also available at <http://gsps.ucdavis.edu/pds>. Also, as part of Financial Aid, the Student Employment Center coordinates employment opportunities, including community service jobs. Visit <http://jobs.ucdavis.edu>, or call 530-752-0502.

## Fellowships and Scholarships

Graduate Studies (internal) fellowships and graduate scholarships are awarded once a year for the following year, beginning in the fall quarter and usually due in early December. New students apply online at the time of application for admission; continuing students also apply on-line and instructions for on-line application will be sent during the fall quarter.

More info about internal

fellowships: [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal\\_fellowships.html#1](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal_fellowships.html#1)

## Graduate Program Fellowship Allocations (formerly called Block Grants) for Departmental Stipends, Fee and Tuition Support

The SBG scholarship committee and Graduate Program Coordinator will notify students of the application process and submission deadlines each academic year. Awards are made to entering students upon recommendation for admission on a case-by-case basis.

## Henry A. Jastro Research Scholarship Awards

These awards are made through the College of Environmental and Agricultural Sciences and by the SBG Graduate Group in recognition of students' potential to carry out research. The SBG scholarship committee and Graduate Program Coordinator will notify students of the application process and submission deadlines each academic year.

## External Grants and Fellowships

As a graduate student, you will be notified about external grants and fellowships as they become available. The Graduate Program Coordinator will distribute external grant and fellowship information as it is advertised by Graduate Studies and other sources.

## Work Study

The federal government pays for a percentage of the costs of research employment, including wages and fee remission. You must complete the application for various types of financial aid, available on the Financial Aid Web site at <http://financialaid.ucdavis.edu>. You must also have submitted a FAFSA, <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>. The SBG Graduate Group determines recipients of Work Study awards.

## Loans

Information available at Financial Aid, <http://financialaid.ucdavis.edu/graduate/Types/Loans.html>

## Travel Grants

Graduate Studies offers a limited number of travel awards twice per year for travel to professional meetings. You will be notified of application due dates throughout the year. The amount of the award varies depending on how far you are traveling. You are only eligible to receive this award once. For more information, visit [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal\\_travel.html](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal_travel.html)

## Travel Grants through the Graduate Student Association (GSA)

The GSA also offers a limited number of travel awards twice per year. (You cannot receive a GSA travel award if you have received an award from Graduate Studies for the same instance of travel.) Visit the GSA Web site, [http://gsa.ucdavis.edu/Travel\\_Awards](http://gsa.ucdavis.edu/Travel_Awards).

## Online Funding Resources

- Community of Sciences, <http://www.cos.com>

- The Foundation Center, <http://foundationcenter.org>
- UC Davis External Fellowship Programs and Grant Announcements, [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/external\\_fellowships\\_pol\\_proc.html](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/external_fellowships_pol_proc.html)
- Search Engines for Extramural Support, [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/external\\_fellowships.cfm](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/external_fellowships.cfm)
- Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Extramural Grant and Fellowship Application Procedures, [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal\\_fellowships.html](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport/internal_fellowships.html)
- The Office of Research Web site, <http://research.ucdavis.edu/home.cfm>
- General financial aid, see also the Graduate Studies Student Support Web page, <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/ssupport>

### Online Grant Writing Resources

- The Foundation Center, <http://foundationcenter.org>
- The Social Sciences Research Council, <http://www.ssrc.org>
- The University of California, Berkeley article, The Making of a Successful Proposal, <http://ls.berkeley.edu/graduate/grant-writing-resources>
- The University of California, Berkeley Dissertation Proposal Workshop, <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/DissPropWorkshop>

## COMMITTEES

### Guidance Committee

Your guidance committee will consist of the graduate group adviser, your major professor, and an additional SBG faculty member. Your committee is appointed through consultation among you, your major professor, and the adviser when you begin your graduate program. Your guidance committee assists with academic planning such as course selection and timing. Your course of study is subject to the approval of the adviser and your guidance committee. Your guidance committee will meet at least once a year during your first year (ideally by end of the first quarter) of residency and as needed until you pass your MS exam or advance to candidacy.

### MS Thesis Committee

The MS thesis committee consists of your major professor and no fewer than two other faculty members. Members of the committee are selected through consultation among you, your major professor, and perhaps with input from your guidance committee. You complete the Candidacy for the Master's Degree – Thesis Plan I available at <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>, secure appropriate program approvals, submit it to the Graduate Program Coordinator, pay the candidacy fee at the Cashier's Office, and file it with Graduate Studies; the dean of Graduate Studies makes the official

committee appointment. For a general calendar of deadline and filing dates, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/calendar.html>.

The MS thesis committee supervises your research and has the final authority to review and approve your thesis. It is your responsibility to keep the thesis committee informed of your progress.

### Ph.D. Qualifying Exam Committee

Typically, five members of the faculty serve on the QE committee. Traditionally in the SBG Graduate Group, the student's major professor does not serve on the examination committee. Members of the committee are selected through consultation among you, your major professor, and perhaps with input from your guidance committee. *The Office of Graduate Studies requires that one member of your committee be external to the graduate group.* You complete the Qualifying Exam Application, available at <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>, obtain the appropriate program approvals, and file it with Graduate Studies; the dean of Graduate Studies makes the official committee appointment. For a general calendar of deadline and filing dates, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/calendar.html>.

### Ph.D. Dissertation Committee

Typically the Dissertation Committee consists of the major professor and usually two and sometimes three additional faculty members. The committee may not consist of fewer than three members. Members of the committee are selected through consultation among you, your major professor, and your adviser. One member may be from outside the graduate group and/or off campus. If the proposed committee member is not a faculty member at UCD, he or she must be approved by Graduate Studies before serving on the committee. Following successful completion of the QE, the examination committee chair will complete the form for Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Plan B. After the form is signed, your three-member dissertation committee appointed, and the fee paid to the Cashier's Office, you will submit it to Graduate Studies for approval by the dean of Graduate Studies. International students must advance to candidacy before the first day of the quarter to qualify for reduced nonresident tuition.

## **MASTER'S DEGREE**

### Degree Requirements

A master's degree may be awarded upon completion of one or two basic plans in which either a thesis or a comprehensive exam is required. SBG's MS degree requirements are available at, <http://soils.ucdavis.edu/resource-guide/program-requirements-checklist/>

Only courses in which you receive grades of A, B, C, or S may satisfy requirements for the master's degree. If you receive a D+ or lower, that course cannot be used to satisfy the unit requirement for the master's degree. However, that grade will be used to determine your grade point average. You must

maintain an average GPA of 3.0 in all upper division and graduate courses during residence. Courses graded S/U will not be used to determine GPA.

You may apply for advancement to candidacy if your GPA is slightly below 3.0 and if you are currently enrolled in course work, the successful completion of which will give you the required 3.0 GPA. Even if you've advanced to candidacy, you must attain a minimum GPA of 3.0 before your degree will be awarded.

### Advancement to Candidacy

After completing one-half of your course requirements and at least one quarter before completing all degree requirements, you must file an official application for Candidacy for Degree of Master of Science before completing all degree requirements. The Candidacy for the Master's Degree – Thesis Plan I form and the Candidacy for the Master's Degree – Comprehensive Exam Plan II form are each available online at <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

### Thesis Plan I and Instructions

If your candidacy is approved, Graduate Studies will send a copy to your thesis committee chair, the Graduate Program Coordinator, and to you. If Graduate Studies determines that you are not eligible for advancement, you will be told the reason for your deferral, which may include low GPA, outstanding Incomplete grades, a grade of U, or D+ or below in required courses, or insufficient units.

Once you have advanced to candidacy under Thesis Plan I, you will write your thesis and present it to your committee for review and approval. All committee members must sign the thesis title page to certify their satisfaction with the thesis. If the quality of your thesis is unacceptable, the committee will give you a clearly specified period of time to improve your thesis, usually one quarter or more. If, after that period of time, the thesis is still unacceptable, the majority may recommend to the dean of Graduate Studies that you be disqualified from further graduate study.

You are responsible for filing your thesis on the appropriate filing dates according to the proper format. The following Web sites will assist you:

- Instructions for electronic submission are located at [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree\\_candidates.html](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree_candidates.html).
- For instructions on thesis preparation, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/filing.html>.
- For a general calendar of deadline and filing dates, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/calendar.html>.

The following two documents must accompany the thesis and can be found online:

- University Library Release Form, <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/filing.html>

- Graduate Program Exit Information, [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree\\_candidates.html](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree_candidates.html).

### Exam Plan II

If you have opted for Plan II, you will take the comprehensive examination during the fifth week of fall and spring quarters each year. The questions will cover the five core disciplines: i) Soil Chemistry, ii) Soil Physics, iii) Soil Microbiology, iv) Pedology, and v) Soil Fertility/Biogeochemistry. Typically, students are given three hours to write answers to the examination questions. Each section of the examination is graded separately and students must earn a passing grade on all sections of the exam. Students who do not pass any or all sections may take the examination one additional time. When you take the exam, you must be registered or on Filing Fee status. The results of the examination must be reported to Graduate Studies by your committee chair, using the Master's Exam Report Form, available at <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

### Second Master's Degree

You may work toward a second master's degree as long as the adviser and the dean of Graduate Studies determine that your second degree will not be a duplication of your previous degree. You may share up to 12 units from one UC Davis program with another and you must spend at least two quarters in regular graduate standing in your second master's program. You must also complete a separate thesis or examination. See the SBG Graduate Program Coordinator for the application.

## **THE DOCTORAL DEGREE**

### Degree Requirements

To switch from MS to PhD or to pursue two degree program simultaneously, you will need to submit Petition for Change of Graduate Major, Degree Objective, or for Double Graduate Major form below. Please see the Student Affairs Officer or Program Academic Adviser if you have any questions.

[http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/local\\_resources/forms/D065-graduate-major-degree-change.pdf](http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/forms/D065-graduate-major-degree-change.pdf)

SBG's Ph.D. degree requirements are available at <http://soils.ucdavis.edu/resource-guide/program-requirements-checklist/>.

You must pass a qualifying examination (QE) for the Ph.D. degree. All required courses must be completed before admission to the QE.

### Two Tracks of Study

With the adviser and your guidance committee, you may choose one of two tracks of study: Soil Science or Soils and Biogeochemistry. Both tracks have the same course requirements but differ in the QE subject matter.

- The Soil Science track is based on a traditional soil science course of study consisting of five core disciplines: Soil Chemistry, Soil Physics, Soil Microbiology, Pedology, Soil Fertility/Biogeochemistry.
- The Soils and Biogeochemistry track is based on a broader definition of soil science that includes soils but also permits the student to focus on specific areas related to, but outside of, the traditional domain of soil science. Examples of these other tracks include ecology, ecotoxicology, molecular biology, microbiology, geology, analytical chemistry, plant science, agronomy, among others.

### Qualifying Exam (QE)

The Application for Qualifying Examination is available at <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/> and should be submitted at least four weeks prior to the examination date. You may not take the qualifying exam until your application has been approved by the dean of Graduate Studies.

Before scheduling the QE, the faculty member of the QE committee closest to your research interest may decide to give a comprehensive written or oral examination to determine if you are prepared for the QE. Prior to the QE, one or more members of the QE committee may choose to give a preliminary written or oral examination. You need to pick a chair for your committee, usually the member in the discipline most closely aligned with your primary focus.

The QE typically begins with a brief presentation of your research proposal and preliminary results. The proposal, based on the general format of USDA-NRI grant proposal programs, will be 12-15 pages double-spaced, including tables and figures. This is followed by questions targeting your research proposal. Then the committee will question you for breadth of knowledge in soil science and/or in your specific areas of emphasis. No time limit has been set for the length of the examination, but a typical examination is three hours in length. It is your responsibility to arrange the date and time of the examination in consultation with committee members. You are responsible for reserving the room for the examination.

The possible outcomes of the qualifying exam are: pass, not pass, or fail. Pass indicates you can advance to candidacy and there are no more course requirements. A not pass can vary from requiring you to taking the exam again at a later date to addressing deficiencies in one or two areas by taking a class, writing a paper, or retaking part of the exam again. These outcomes are decided upon jointly by the committee, will be put into writing, and you will be given a specified time frame in which to complete the requirements. Fail means you cannot take the exam again and will have to terminate your degree program. The decision of fail usually follows an unsuccessful repeat of an exam following a not pass.

Following successful completion of the QE, the examination committee chair will complete the form for Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Plan B. By this time you should have the members of your dissertation committee selected. After the form is signed, your three-member dissertation

committee indicated, and the fee paid to the Cashier's Office, you will submit it to Graduate Studies for approval by the dean of Graduate Studies. International students must advance to candidacy before the first day of the quarter to qualify for reduced nonresident tuition.

### **Dissertation and Instructions**

Your dissertation committee guides you and evaluates you upon the merits of your dissertation. You are responsible for filing your dissertation on the appropriate filing dates according to the proper format. The following Web sites will assist you:

- For instructions on electronic submission, visit [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree\\_candidates.html](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree_candidates.html).
- For instructions on preparation, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/filing.html>.
- For a general calendar of deadline and filing dates, visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/calendar.html>.

You must complete the following four forms when you submit your dissertation:

- UMI/PQIL Doctoral Dissertation Agreement form, <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>
- Confidential Questionnaire, <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/exitsurvey>
- Survey of Earned Doctorates: <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/exitsurvey/index.cfm>
- Graduate Program Exit Information, [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree\\_candidates.html](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/students/degree_candidates.html).

### **Time to Complete Doctoral Degree**

You will have four calendar years after the date you pass your qualifying examination to submit your dissertation.

### **Exit Seminar**

M.S. Plan I, M.S. Plan II, and Ph.D. students are required to present an exit seminar to the SBG faculty and students prior to submitting the thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies. M.S. Plan I students are required to present an exit seminar on their research to the SBG faculty and students prior to submitting the thesis to the Office of Graduate Studies. MS Plan II students must present an exit seminar on an area of interest in Soils and Biogeochemistry to the SBG faculty and students during the same quarter of the comprehensive exam. PhD students are required to present an exit seminar to the SBG faculty and students prior to submitting the dissertation to the Office of Graduate Studies.

## GRADES

### Repeating a Course for Improvement

With the consent of the adviser and the dean of Graduate Studies, you may repeat a course in which you received a grade of C, D, F or U up to a maximum of nine units for all courses repeated. In such repeated courses, only the most recently received grade and corresponding grade points shall be used in calculating your GPA, but all units attempted and grades received shall remain part of your permanent record.

### Opting for S/U Grading

You may elect to take one normally graded course per quarter on an S/U basis provided the course is used to explore an area unrelated to your academic discipline and cannot be used to fulfill any of your graduate program course requirements or prerequisites. To receive an S grade in lower or upper division work, you must achieve at least a C-. To receive an S grade in a graduate course, you must receive a B- or better. S/U petitions must be filed with Graduate Studies by the end of the fifth week of the quarter. For more information, visit <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/su.pdf>. The form is available at <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/>.

### Incomplete (I) Grade

If you are doing well in a course but are unable to complete the work because of illness, personal emergency, or other good cause, an Incomplete is appropriate. You must remove the Incomplete grade before the end of the third succeeding quarter, otherwise the grade will revert to an F. To remove the incomplete, a Petition for Incomplete Grad Change form must be signed by the instructor and be submitted by either the instructor or the Student Affairs Officer.

[http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/local\\_resources/forms/D050-incomplete-grade-change.pdf](http://registrar.ucdavis.edu/local_resources/forms/D050-incomplete-grade-change.pdf)

## PROBATION AND DISQUALIFICATION

If your performance is less than satisfactory or you are not meeting program requirements, you are placed on academic probation and given a timeline for removing your deficiencies. Academic probation can result in disqualification, which means you are no longer eligible to continue graduate study at UC Davis. (The term “disqualification” should not be confused with “dismissal.” Dismissal is removal from graduate study based on behavior or conduct.) If you are subject to disqualification, you may submit an appeal within 30 days for reconsideration for cause to the Administrative Committee of the Graduate Council.

For a full explanation of disqualification,  
visit [http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/policies/disqual\\_appeal.pdf](http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/facstaff/policies/disqual_appeal.pdf).

## MENTORING GUIDELINES

Mentoring of a graduate student by a faculty member, as recognized by the UC Davis Graduate Council, is broader than advising a student in a program of study to fulfill coursework requirements and is distinct from formal instruction in a given discipline. Faculty and graduate students must realize that, while the major professor will be the primary mentor during a student's career at UCD, many of the mentoring "functions" defined below may be performed by program faculty other than the major professor. An important corollary to this recognition is that faculty members must realize that much of their interaction with all students has an important mentoring component to it. Graduate students also have responsibilities toward successful mentoring, also indicated below.

Faculty's responsibility in mentoring graduate students is defined as:

- Guiding students through degree requirements.
- Guiding students through thesis or dissertation research.
- Guiding students through professional development.

As partners in the mentoring relationship, graduate students have responsibilities. As mentees, students should:

- Be aware of their own mentoring needs and how they change through their graduate tenure and discuss these changing needs with their mentors.
- Recognize that one faculty member may not be able to satisfy all of a student's mentoring needs. Seek assistance from multiple individuals/organizations to fulfill the mentoring roles described above.
- Recognize that their mentoring needs must respect their mentor's other responsibilities and time commitments.
- Maintain and seek regular communication with their mentors, especially their major professors.

For detailed explanations of these guidelines,  
visit <http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/gradcouncil/mentoring.pdf>.

## GRADUATE STUDENT ASSOCIATION (GSA)

The UC Davis GSA is the officially recognized student government for the entire campus and serves to build community through activities and advocacy. Visit <http://gsa.ucdavis.edu/> or network with your fellow graduate students to learn about your current SBG representative.

## THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

If you receive your graduate degree in September, December, March or June, you are eligible to participate in the annual commencement ceremony held in June. Immediately following the ceremony is a reception for degree recipients and their guests. In April, Graduate Studies will send you information about commencement.

## ADDITIONAL CAMPUS RESOURCES

- Graduate Studies: <http://gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/index.cfm>
- Union for Academic Student  
Employees: [http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies\\_employee\\_labor\\_relations/index.html](http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/index.html)
- Library : <http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/>
- Internship and Career Center: <http://iccweb.ucdavis.edu/>
- Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning: <http://cetlfm.ocp.ucdavis.edu/fspapplication/home.php>
- Student Health Center: <http://shcs.ucdavis.edu/>
- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): <http://shcs.ucdavis.edu/services/caps.html>
- Student Disability Center: <http://drc.ucdavis.edu/>
- Teaching Resources Center: <http://trc.ucdavis.edu/>
- Housing: <http://housing.ucdavis.edu/>
- Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS): <http://www.taps.ucdavis.edu/>
- Recreation: <http://cru.ucdavis.edu>

## PRINCIPLES OF COMMUNITY

Please visit <http://principles.ucdavis.edu/>, for the UC Davis Principles of Community.

## GRADUATE STUDENT BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please visit [http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/GS401\\_StudentRightsResponsibilities.pdf](http://www.gradstudies.ucdavis.edu/forms/GS401_StudentRightsResponsibilities.pdf).